

Madison, commissioners trying to resolve sewer dispute

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Lake County commissioners have denied Madison Village's request to provide water services to the new Madison Middle School.

The village and Madison Schools

previously made an agreement in which the new middle school's site in Madison Township would connect to the village's sewer and water services.

However, Lake County commissioners have a say on whether the village and the school district can

tap in.

Commissioners are requesting that the district receive its water supply from the county rather than from the village for the new school building. Madison Schools would have the ability to connect to the village sewer lines, according to the

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commissioners, but the district would have to pay tap-in fees as well as a share of assessment costs.

The commissioners gave a memorandum of understanding to Madison Schools and Madison Village in June regarding these stipulations

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and it would have to be signed before the commissioners would give approval.

The village sent a letter in July to the commissioners stating it cannot sign the memorandum with the current wording. Madison Village, in the letter, objects to the commissioners' statement that the water services will be provided by Lake County Utilities Department.

"The village's water and sanitary system work in tandem with each other," wrote Madison Village Administrator Alyson Moritz. "While some of the village's water customers do not use the village's sanitary sewer, there are no customers that use the sanitary sewer and have their water serviced by another facility. In fact, sanitary sewer billing is based on water usage that is metered."

She said it's in the best economic interest of Madison Schools to connect to the village because it is close to the

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infrastructure compared to the county's.

County Commissioner Daniel P. Troy disagrees.

"I don't think that's the best interest of the school's taxpayers," he said. "The village buys the water from us on a bulk basis and runs it through their system."

Troy said the commissioners have been accommodating in allowing the school system to tap in to the village's sewer system.

"At some point, (the sewer system) is still in our service area," Troy said. "We wanted to indicate our conditions because the system runs by the school and (if needed) they would have to pay their fair share. We would not necessarily make them disconnect from the system."

Moritz said the village is trying to help the school secure the best option.

"We want to resolve this as

quickly as possible, and we're working towards that goal," she said. "We still have hopes we can work with the county and school to come up with a resolution that works for everyone."

Village Council plans to discuss the issue further and explore options at Monday's council meeting.

Madison Schools Superintendent Roger Goudy said they are working with the county and the village to resolve the issue, but ultimately an agreement must be reached.

"The school is not in the sewer and water business," he said. "The school board is committed to building where we told the community."

Goudy said if they do connect to the county water system it would cost more because of the location.

"The village's sewer and water is right across the

street," he said. "The county water lines are way over by Walmart."

Despite complications, the school district is moving forward with their construction plans and is currently seeking bids for the project.

Goudy said the district plans to have a ground breaking on Sept. 1.

"Two years from this fall, we will be occupying both of the school buildings," he said. "In order to accomplish that, we had to start the early site work now."